



**ORDO AUGUSTINIANORUM RECOLLECTORUM**  
**GENERALATUS**



Prot. N.  
 (in responsione hic numerus referatur)

Rev. Fr. Lauro Lalar, Prior Provincial  
 Rev. Fr. Julius M. Marcos, President of REAP

Fraternal and cordial greetings to all the participants of the assembly of the Recoletos Educational Apostolate of the Philippines.

Through this message, I am one with you in this REAP assembly, and in the name of the Order, I express my gratitude for the important task that you do in the field of education in the Philippines.

The General Chapter asked for “a renewed commitment to the educational apostolate. It has a logical presence within the Augustinian Recollect charism, and this field of education is today one of the major and most needed platforms for the process of evangelization.” (Ordinances, 17) With confidence, I wish to encourage you and to share with you the demand of the Gospel that this apostolate has, at present, in the Order and in the Church.

### **Revitalization and restructuring of the Order**

The Order seeks to respond, from its very charismatic identity and through the process of revitalization and restructuring, to the call of the Church toward the new evangelization. To realize this process, we need to reaffirm once more the sense of belongingness and to assume the very purpose and mission of the Order. We ought to be clear in our common objective as specified by the *Constitutions* and in the direction we ought to pursue. If this direction is ambiguous, poorly defined and is not passed on, each member of the Order will pursue, consciously or unconsciously, his own concrete objective and vision. We invite you to have the conviction of “being an Order,” to value the common charism that we have received as Augustinian Recollects; we encourage you to live it out and to evangelize as a community renewed in hope.

The Chapter General stressed the importance of communion. Communion is essential to our charism. It revitalizes and helps us to be meaningful. It will be difficult to draw up plans, programs or objectives common for all provinces, if each province or community implements only what it considers to be its priorities and goals, if we allow ourselves to be carried away by personalism or by a group or nation’s interest, if we seek for complacency, if we favor accommodation and isolation, while undermining the exigency of the common charism and the missionary dimension. With these attitudes, which draw us away from communion, we will be promoting the dispersion of strength and disruption of community life, formation and apostolate.

The current situation and the actual moment we live are a providential opportunity to renew our mission, to revive generously our personal response to the call of the Lord, to foster communion, and to grow in our conviction of being an Order. We are called to be Augustinian Recollects and, as such, we have a mission in the Church today. The provinces, vicariates and delegations, with diverse cultures and ministries, ought to have the same orientation and to be united in one common purpose.

Since the very start of the process, we have been echoing a pressing call to co-responsibility, and we insist once again on the revitalization of the Order, which is a process of personal, communitarian and pastoral conversion that affects us all. You, brothers, who are working in the educational apostolate, shall have to reaffirm likewise your common purpose to feel that you are involved in the common mission of the Order in the Church today.

### **Spiritual and communitarian life**

The great challenge of the Order is the spiritual life, which is understood in its strictest sense, or as “life in Christ, a life according to the Spirit.” (VC 93) In order to carry out well your mission, you shall have to begin from a personal encounter with Christ, the Lord. Pope Benedict XVI, as he delivered his final Angelus, has called to mind today the primacy of prayer: “Without prayer, all of the works of the apostolate and of charity is reduced to activism. We learn to give the proper time to prayer, both personal and communitarian, which gives breath to our spiritual life.” (24.2.2013)

It is a challenge for us to boldly promote *the mission that sprouts from the contemplative and communitarian love*. The Constitutions tell us that “contemplative love, as well as uniting hearts and souls in community, is itself diffusive and apostolic.” (no. 23) I urge you to discover in the Constitutions and in your own Filipino culture the importance of fraternal life of the community. The community, which has emerged as fruit of the Spirit, is renewed unceasingly and it revitalizes its prophetic dimension, as it cultivates the contemplative dimension and lives out faithfully the charism. Obedience, poverty and chastity are an offering of love that is lived and developed in fraternal life and in one’s self-giving to the service of charity.

Your educational apostolate gains its authentic meaning, if it is sustained by a strong experience of God, by a solid formation, and by the fraternal life in community. It is only through this that we shall enter into the dynamics of revitalization and we shall respond to the demands of the new evangelization.

### **Criteria of an Augustinian Recollect educational ministry**

The commission responsible for the process of revitalization and restructuring of the Order, as they begun analyzing the present state of the Order, especially its determined possibilities, has proposed some criteria of discernment for communities dedicated to the educational apostolate. This discernment will help revitalize our life and mission. It does not deal with maintaining what we have at all cost or with continuing what we have been doing. It deals with directing our educational ministries, proceeding from a new vision and from the conviction of being an Order. The specific criteria, which the commission on revitalization proposes for our educational ministries are the following:

1. To be enlivened by an Idearium or by a character, which is properly Augustinian, receiving from it, one's conviction to evangelize and charismatic identity.
2. To search for the quality of teaching: to offer an integral pedagogy, which includes all human dimensions like culture, solidarity, and ecology.
3. To be guided by an academic program.
4. To take part in ecclesial communion, being in tune with the diocese and with the Catholic schools there.
5. To provide a systematic formation program of the faculty.
6. Communion and communication with the Augustinian Recollect schools, with which, the academic institutional program is to be drawn up and to be implemented.
7. To dedicate a special attention to the school organizations: parents, students and alumni.

I invite you to reflect especially on these three criteria:

*a. Shared Mission*

The “shared mission” in the educational apostolate can be defined as the realization of an authentic academic community, which is built on values and is derived from a communion of life, rooted in the same belongingness to Christ. We, Augustinian Recollects, are called to open the spiritual wealth and charism of the Order to those who seek for it, encouraging them as laypersons to live them out in the educational ministry in ways, which are suitable and accessible to them.

Communion in the educational mission requires that the religious and lay educators assume the call to foster the Christian way, being witnesses of Jesus Christ, and at the same time, becoming a sign, reminder and proclamation of the values of the Gospel. The lay educator is called to realize his ministry in the Church, living out his lay vocation in the communitarian structure of the school, but always coming from his very faith.

*b. Formation of the Faculty*

Another important criterion is the availability of the continuous formation like the learning and development of new knowledge, the renewal and updating of methodologies, most especially, the spiritual and religious formation, and the shared mission.

Continuous formation, due to the variety of its aspects, demands a constant personal and communitarian search for its different forms of actuation, without forgetting the necessity of a formative itinerary, shared and nourished by the interchange and unity among the religious and lay educators of our schools. It is, likewise, necessary for both religious and lay educators to undergo an adequate formative theological and spiritual itinerary to allow their relationship with Jesus to grow and to have themselves configured to Christ, the Teacher.

### *c. Vocational Ministry*

Vocational ministry is fundamental within the whole pastoral ministry and, therefore, has to be well present in the life and activity of the Order. Thus, it has to have a prominent place in our educational apostolate. Furthermore, the promotion of vocations ought to be transformed into a collective action of the whole Augustinian Recollect family. And for this purpose, I ask for an effort of collaboration with our Augustinian Recollect Sisters and with the nuns of the Saint Ezekiel Moreno Convent in Bacolod.

The process of revitalization and restructuring, which the 54<sup>th</sup> General Chapter initiated, calls us to develop a vocational ministry that starts from a profound renewal of the quality of our consecrated life and apostolic mission in order to manifest the vitality of the Augustinian Recollect charism and to let the words of Jesus resound in us and in our communities: "Come and follow me." I hope that, in this REAP assembly, you may be able to lay the implementing foundation of the vocational ministry program in the educational ministry in the Philippines, a program drawn up by the general commission on the vocational ministry.

#### **With the power of the Spirit**

Your testimony of a life of faith and community is fundamental in the educational apostolate. "The Church – and our Order – needs to be jolted to prevent it from becoming well established in comfort, stagnation, and lukewarmness, aloof from the suffering of the continent's poor. We need every community to become a powerful radiating center of life in Christ. We hope for a new Pentecost that will free us from fatigue, disillusionment and conformity to the environment; a coming of the Spirit who renews our joy and hope." (*Aparecida Document*, 362)

I invite you to put your trust in Jesus Christ and to assume the mission in education with a renewed dedication, coming from our Augustinian Recollect identity. The certainty that the Lord will be with us all the days until the end of the world and that He pours forth upon us the power of His Spirit each day emboldens us.

Rome, 24 February 2013.

Fr. Miguel Miró  
Prior general